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EDUCATION AND SOCIAL PROGRESS IN THE PHILIPPINES

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A little more than six years have elapsed since the establishment in the Philippines by the American government of a bureau of education and since the organization there of public instruction. In this interval public instruction has had a prominence seldom accorded it elsewhere. On it the government has largely relied for obtaining a successful issue for its policy in the Philippines, and of all the efforts put forth by the American government public instruction seems to have most fully won the support of the Filipino people; nor has the experiment so far failed to justify the confidence originally accorded to it, and the past twelve months have seen a greater public outlay and a larger measure of support from both insular and local branches of the government than have ever before been witnessed. This open reliance of the American government, almost from the beginning, upon public instruction accords with a confidence generally felt in America that through the public schools comes the most effective solution of social problems.

In the Philippines the fundamental aim of the school system is to effect a social transformation of the people, and the system can only be understood in the light of the social conditions which prevail. Out of a total population of less than eight million souls, as determined by the census of 1903, about seven million are Christianized peoples. While they occupy only about half the geographical area of the archipelago, this area comprises most of the available seacoast, the fertile plains and the cultivated river valleys. While this population differs in respect to language, and to a less degree in point of character, from island to island, nevertheless, it was all converted to Christianity at the same time—about three

centuries ago—and it was all subjected to a long period of identical administrative and civilizing influences, so that the culture and social conditions of the people are nearly everywhere virtually the same. One who has lived in a town in the northern part of the island of Luzon might visit a town hundreds of miles to the south on the islands of Bohol, or Mindanao, and recognize at once that the surroundings, the life and problems of the people were the same.

Throughout these islands the unit of administration under the Spanish régime was the *pueblo* or township. There were about 1,160 of these in existence at the end of the Spanish rule, and perhaps I can in no way give a truer impression of the life and surroundings of the Filipino than to describe a typical one. The jurisdiction of the town I have in mind embraces a territory of about thirty square miles. For about three miles its territory lies along a beautiful strip of shore and sea. Every mile or so there is a fishing hamlet, a cluster of nipa-thatched, pile-built houses, set back among cocoanut palms and acacias, while the beach of yellow coral sand is covered with long fishing boats and with nets spread to dry. The "center of the town" is about a mile back from the coast, on the banks of a small river, up which good-sized trading praus can get at high tide. Like all Filipino towns, it is built about a public square or plaza. On one side is the magnificent church, whose high belfry and iron roof are discernible for many miles around above the palms and mango trees. Another side of the plaza is occupied by the Tribunal or Presidencia, where the public officers—president, treasurer, secretary, justice of the peace and municipal police have their headquarters. The rest of the space about the plaza is occupied by stores kept by Filipinos, Chinese and occasionally by foreigners, and either facing the plaza or on the streets in the immediate vicinity are perhaps a dozen handsome, well-built houses, the lower floors usually of stone, the upper of wood, where live the few wealthy and literate families of the town. These families own extensive rice haciendas in the *pueblo*, have large numbers of dependent tenants and are interested in a number of profitable commercial undertakings. The head of one of these families is a physician; two others studied in Spain and have traveled in Europe. Most of them have received at least a fair Spanish education. If you enter the homes you will find

beautifully polished floors of hardwood, expensive furniture, mirrors, pianos and harps; you will meet with charming entertainment, bright conversation, with a warm-hearted, sincere welcome. This class of people is existent in practically every town, although their condition would not always be as favorable as that which I have just described. They represent the highest social class among the Filipino people. This is the class locally known as the "gente ilustrada" as distinguished from the "gente baja," or the poorer and illiterate class, and in the proportion between these two social divisions, the gente ilustrada is but a very small fraction. Out of the 26,000 people who live in the pueblo which I have described, only about a dozen families belong to the gente ilustrada and the balance are weak and illiterate peasants, whose life and character we must now consider.

Scattered over most of the jurisdiction of the town there are hamlets called barrios. In the town which we have been describing, four are on the coast and are fishing barrios, and one is on a small island off shore; eleven are in the plain or valley and three or four are far back in the hills—little settlements considerably removed from the life and influence of the town. Despite the fact that this poorer population is Christian (and this is a most important fact), their material condition and surroundings differ little from that of their ancestors when the Spanish conquered the islands. Their houses are small, insufficient shacks of palm leaves and bamboo; their food a diet of rice with an inadequate amount of fish. Such knowledge of the outside world as reaches them comes in a most distorted and misleading guise and simply serves to delude and misguide a people whose ignorance and credulity are almost unbelievable. There are a small number of carpenters, smiths and masons among them, these industries usually being localized in certain barrios, but the great majority of the population who are not fishermen are agriculturists. In some provinces, notably on the Ilokano coast of northern Luzon, many of these peasants own their little farms, which average altogether about eight or nine acres, and form a class of what we would call peasant proprietors, but the great bulk of the islanders are not so fortunate, their relation to the soil being simply that of tenant. The owner of the estate on which they have most of them lived from infancy,

stands in a peculiar relation to these people. The foundation of this relationship is purely economic, and yet the influence extends to every side of their life. The owner is the "amo," or master; they are his "dependientes," or dependents. Most of them are in a position of bonded indebtedness to the amo, an obligation which is never repudiated, and which descends from father to child. The debtor himself may not know the origin of the obligation, and being quite ignorant of mathematical calculation he is always uncertain as to its amount, nor does he know how it increases or might be decreased. If trouble comes or death, sickness or destitution, it is to his amo that he appeals for relief, with the result of still further increasing his obligations. This dependiente has nothing laid by for the future; he has not even a granary nor facilities for hoarding enough food to carry him from one harvest to the next. As the interval between harvests draws to a close the price of rice invariably rises and must be obtained on credit and by hypothecation of the future crop.

Over and above the economic control the amo sways the action and attitude of his dependientes. In the time of revolution they obeyed implicitly his direction to commit acts of violence. If the amo joins the present secession from the Catholic Church, known as the Aglipayano schism, the dependientes become Aglipayanos also. This local or petty despotism is known in the Philippines as "caciquismo."

It will be seen how important in its influence on the efforts of our government such a social condition as this is. Moreover, the relationship between master and dependent is primarily a commercial one. It is not mitigated and softened by the kindness, the loyalty and responsibility for the welfare of the weaker which are felt in old aristocratic systems; it is hard, selfish, grasping commercial exploitation. This condition of things is not primarily due to Spanish rule, it is characteristic of Malayan society. The poor Malayan instinctively dreads and submits to the power of the stronger, especially where that power is of a material kind, and the Spanish system in its very efforts to advance the population, did much to aggravate these social distinctions.

About 1835 the Philippines were open to foreign trade. An almost unbroken period of development and prosperity, during

which the population rapidly increased, followed and was only broken by revolution. But with the exception of the Spaniards, Chinese and foreigners, the only class of Filipinos who profited by this economic prosperity, was the small upper class. When the Spanish government organized public schools, the instruction, though widely distributed, was adequate only for a small number, and thus the upper class alone benefited while the great mass of the population remained in benighted ignorance as before.

This social condition being understood, public instruction in the Philippines was organized with the conscious purpose of transforming the condition and position of the *gente baja*. Our aim is to destroy *caciquismo* and to replace the dependent class with a body of independent peasantry, owning their own homes, able to read and write, and thereby gain access to independent sources of information, able to perform simple calculations, keep their own accounts and consequently to rise out of their condition of indebtedness, and inspired if possible with a new spirit of self-respect, a new consciousness of personal dignity and civil rights. For the accomplishment of this end our inheritance from the Spanish régime was small; a considerable number of school houses, planted in the centers of population in the towns survived the destruction of war and have been of great service. There was a body of Filipino teachers conversant with the Spanish language, some of whom after receiving English instruction, have become admirable members of the teaching force, but most of them were too old, too conservative and incompetent to be of use and were gradually dispensed with. The result was that there is no historic connection between the schools under the Spanish system and those under the American government, and while most of the institutions prevailing in the Philippines are built upon Spanish foundations, this is not true of the schools. They are distinctively a new product, and while differing radically in essentials from what obtains in the United States, they are undoubtedly the most distinctively American institution which has been transplanted to Philippine soil.

Added to other difficulties there was the question of language, and this was resolved by making all instruction in all public schools, English. I cannot enter upon any general discussion of the advisability of this decision at the present time. I can only enume-

rate some of the reasons why it was done. If there had been one common Malayan language spoken by all the seven million inhabitants, undoubtedly this language would have been chosen as the language of instruction, but there are at least eight distinctive languages widely spoken by the Christian peoples. Spanish had been decreed in earlier years the language of instruction for the archipelago, but its general use had never been attained, and the people speaking Spanish were limited to the small and wealthy class of each town. English, moreover, is already the language of general intercourse in all parts of the far East. From Japan to Australia and to India one must speak English if he is to travel, engage in business or read the journals in which the great bulk of current thought is expressed. More than this the desire of the Filipinos for the English language was, at the time the decision was made, strongly felt and earnestly plead for.

The problem before the bureau of education a few years ago, then, was about as follows: to organize a system of public primary instruction, not for the selected few, but for the entire juvenile population of the islands, and this meant the placing of a school within the reach of every barrio, and within the jurisdiction of the towns, which I have described, there are about 12,000 barrios. It meant training a corps of native teachers capable of giving this instruction, and training them in a foreign language with which none had any acquaintance. It meant finding the money to build several thousand school houses, pay the teachers, purchase the furniture, books and other educational equipment. Such things as schools will not run themselves, especially in the Philippines, even after once being organized. The most difficult part of the whole problem was to develop an administrative machinery capable of holding the work up to the standard which it was necessary to attain, and of doing this intelligently, systematically and continuously. More than this universal primary instruction being provided for, it was necessary to have in mind the needs of higher instruction and the training of young men for industrial efficiency, the development of both men and women as leaders among their own people, and in the requisite professions. More than this, this task had to be undertaken at a time when the islands were embarrassed by the results of war, and still, to a large extent, in a state of

rebellion; when hostility and distrust existed on the part of the governed for the governors, and when cholera, smallpox and other epidemic diseases were rife, and had demoralized the people, and when times were hard and money extremely scarce, even for the necessities of life. This is how the problem looked no longer than three years and a half ago.

It was necessary in the first place to have a plan, and this plan must be not perhaps the best theoretically, but one which could be carried out and which could be realized not in some distant year, but within a comparatively brief time. The necessity of bringing this general primary instruction within the reach of the entire population and doing it promptly was imperative. Under this necessity we threw precedents entirely aside and broke new ground. There were, and are, in the Philippines about 1,200,000 children between the ages of six and fifteen. These are the years between which theoretically a child should be in school, but it was manifestly far beyond our resources to organize and give instruction to 1,200,000 children. There were, four years ago, only about 100,000 children attending schools, and hardly enough teachers, buildings, and equipment to give instruction to this number. Consequently, a far more modest effort than the usual eight years of primary instruction had to be made. It was felt that three years was the minimum of instruction which a child should receive, and it was felt also that if he got this much and got it during the most receptive years of his childhood, his illiteracy would be broken and the foundation would be laid for a new sort of life for him, and a new social order for the archipelago. Consequently, a primary course of three years' instruction was organized, embracing three years of English, two years of elementary arithmetic and one year of geography. Our calculation showed us that our course of study narrowed to these limits, there were about 400,000 children awaiting our instruction—or, expressed differently, if we could secure and maintain constant attendance at school of 400,000 children, we would be able to give these three years' instruction to all. The years of a child's life when it was best to give him the instruction, we believed to be from nine or ten to twelve or thirteen years. It was apparent, however, that if this work was to be done, it had to be done, despite the difficulty of language, by native teachers. Not less than 6,000 teachers

would be required, and the force of American teachers in the islands was less than one-sixth of this number. American teachers had then been in the islands about two years, and considerable progress with a limited number of students had already been made. A radical change in the work of the American teacher was accordingly decided upon. About four hundred men were selected and designated as district supervising teachers. Each province was divided into districts embracing sometimes one, and more often two, three or four towns. An American teacher was made responsible for the organization and for the school-work within each district. His tasks were, as representative of the bureau of education, to secure the funds for building and opening barrio schools, to organize these schools and get them going, to select from his own classes the brightest and most available young people, set them at work as primary teachers, and secure from municipal funds, under the approval of his superintendent, money to pay them salaries. A campaign of education, moreover, had to be conducted; schools in the barrios and schools for the humble, unenlightened peasantry were a new conception, and it was essential to have the support of the municipal authorities and of the people themselves. Thus the work was outlined in the fall of 1903, and was pushed with the utmost zeal, courage and intelligence by superintendents and supervising teachers. In hundreds of cases the peoples of the barrios were interested to put up school buildings on the promise that when such buildings were completed a teacher would be furnished and instruction opened. Hundreds of such humble institutions began to appear in all parts of the islands. School attendance began rapidly to multiply. In the month of September, 1903, the enrolment amounted to about 182,000 pupils; at the close of the school year in the following March the figure had risen to 227,600. Shortly after the opening of the next school year in April, 1904, the enrolment had become 264,000. From this it went to 300,000, and while attendance was irregular the school year 1904-05 showed a total enrolment for the year of nearly half a million pupils, while in the school year 1905-06 an actual monthly attendance of 375,554 pupils was maintained.

Our first purpose, then, of getting into schools the one-third of the 1,200,000 children between the ages of six and fifteen years,

or all children between nine and twelve has been attained and the significance of this result is apparent, when I add that if we can maintain this result for six or seven more years, even though the extent of our efforts does not increase from the present standard, the result will be that there will be no illiterate young people in the Philippine Islands. The entire new generation will have received a minimum of three years of English instruction.

Brief as this course of instruction is, we are giving it to the population in the belief that it will make the future countryman a better farmer than his father has been, more anxious to own his farm, better able to learn and appreciate improved methods of farming and to husband his resources, to adopt a better standard of life, to build a better and more durable house than the nipa structure in which the great mass of the people live, to calculate the value of his crop when he has harvested it and to secure a fair price for it where he now is defrauded, to compute his liabilities, and so gradually get out of the condition of bonded indebtedness in which to-day, as we have seen, the mass of the population is sunken.

Brief as this instruction is, under the existing laws of the islands, it will nevertheless enfranchise its possessor, giving him a vote in the government of his town and province, and qualifying him perhaps better than any class at the present time is qualified for the direction of local public affairs.

Having gotten our schools built, having gotten our 400,000 children into school, let us see what we did for teachers. The Filipino teacher seems to me the most hopeful and significant result of all we have tried to do. It was early apparent that the Filipino child could be easily instructed, that the power of acquisition was there, but the great question was, can the Filipino be made a teacher of his own people? Can he take the subject-matter of instruction with which he himself is only slightly familiar, and himself impart it to his younger associates? In this matter our liveliest hopes have been more than justified. For service in our schools we have been able to take the pick of the young and rising generation as tested in our schools; young men and women, sometimes from the well-to-do, but far more often from the humbler classes, but eager, intelligent, obedient, extremely teachable and

really gifted in their power to impart. Their instruction has had to proceed hand in hand with their work, and this has been accomplished in two ways—by a teachers' training class, conducted usually each afternoon by the supervising teacher in each district, and secondly, by the teachers' institute, held for a period of not less than four weeks in each province every year. The corps has been rapidly increased in size, and at the end of the last school year it numbered 6,224, made up of 4,395 municipal teachers, appointed by the superintendents and paid by the town revenues, 1,442 "aspirantes," or apprentice teachers, teaching for the time being without pay, but doing the regular work of a teacher, and receiving the same instruction; and a small number, 324, who are paid by the insular government. Of all the forces developing among the Filipino people themselves, the growth in influence and character of this corps of native teachers seems to me to contain most of promise. The islands may be abandoned to other hands; the barrios schools may close and our children scatter, but these thousands of Filipino teachers, both young men and women, in whom the development of character has kept pace with the progress of their enlightenment will be an influence, which, under all circumstances, will abide.

A word should be said also as to our difficulties in financing this educational scheme. Our money is derived from three governmental sources, all of them in the islands—the insular government represented by the Filipino Commission, supplies us with a little more than half of our income; the municipalities, through a system of land tax and appropriation from general funds, afford us not quite as much more, while the provincial governments have made small, but rapidly increasing appropriations on behalf of high schools. For the year that ended last June our resources from all of these sources amounted to \$2,614,850. Especially as regards municipal school funds, great improvement has been achieved. This is due to the good business management of the school superintendents and the gradual increase of local revenues. In addition to the funds raised by taxation, there were voluntary gifts for school purposes, most of them going toward the erection of new school buildings, which aggregated in the school year 1905, the

sum of \$161,409. Most of this money came from the pockets of the very poor people and was given cheerfully and gladly that their children might receive advantages which they, themselves, had been wholly denied.

Besides the system of the primary instruction, two other types of schools have been developed. One is the intermediate school which follows the primary school and offers a boy or girl three further years of instruction. This instruction embraces English, arithmetic, geography, a year of Philippine history and government, three years of science (studies of plants, animals and human physiology) and in addition to these academic branches, each boy in an intermediate school has three years of instruction in agriculture or in shop work, or divides his time between these two branches. It is our intention as soon as the instruction can be organized, to offer a third industrial subject which may be taken in place of agriculture or tool work, and which shall be the study of the fisheries of the archipelago.

The girls on the other hand receive three years of domestic science instruction, which embraces the care of the house, cleaning, sanitation, etc., cooking, and the care of the sick and of infants. Thus the intermediate school supplies the course of study whereby we hope directly to increase the industrial efficiency of the people and to raise the standard of living generally. Well-equipped wood and iron working shops with departments for mechanical drawing, have been established in practically every province and some of the best of our new buildings have been for work of this character, while a large proportion of our funds have gone into their equipment and maintenance. Contrary to general expectations, no branch of our work has met with greater popular support or more enthusiastic approval from the Filipino people.

The Filipino is a natural craftsman, has an artistic sense and true eye and hand and delicate touch; the use of the tool is to him a pleasure and an art. Some seventeen American women teachers were engaged almost exclusively last year in giving instruction in domestic science. The immense usefulness of such teaching, the social gains derived from it, were instantly perceived by the Filipino people, and perhaps this instruction is the most promising

of all in the prompt and beneficial effects which it seems likely to produce. Intermediate instruction is being given now in about one hundred and twenty towns of the archipelago.

In addition to these intermediate schools, however, a still more advanced type is being organized as rapidly as the children are prepared. This is the *high school*, which, like our other educational institutions, departs radically from the typical American high school, but to which young men and women are admitted upon completion of the intermediate course. On entering they elect to follow one of four special courses; a general course in literature, sciences and history, a course in teaching, a course in agriculture, or a course in commerce. A fifth course in elementary technology will be added as soon as the demand increases and our facilities are greater. One of these courses finished provides a total of ten years' schooling to the young man or woman, a very liberal education in view of the social conditions in the archipelago. Three courses, and eventually four, it is expected, will fit the young man or young woman not exactly for a professional life, but for a distinctly useful vocation. In practically every province a large tract of land, frequently embracing a good many acres, has been obtained as a site for these schools and 36 high school buildings, ranging in value from \$10,000 to \$40,000 have already been constructed.

A final word remains to be said about the system of administration. This, like every department of the Philippine government, is a departure from the American type. In our school work there is necessarily very little of local authority. Each province constitutes a school division and at the head of the school work is a superintendent, who is appointed and assigned to duty by the director of education. This superintendent is held responsible for every detail of work within his division. He appoints and dismisses the Filipino teachers and fixes their compensation. He controls, either directly or through the supervising teachers, all school funds raised within the province and is responsible for their correct expenditure. Until recently the school superintendent was, moreover, the third member—the other two being a governor and treasurer—of the governing body in each province, the provincial board. The system has the advantage and deficiencies of every bureaucratic

system. If the force is animated by a good purpose, extremely rapid results can be accomplished by having the work so closely organized and a more general high average is attainable than where local authority is recognized. On the other hand, constant tact must be used, local advice and co-operation must judiciously be sought and respected, or else the ends of our work will be defeated.

The force of Americans in the bureau of education numbers at the present time, besides the office and administrative corps, forty-five superintendents and some 820 American teachers. Of this number approximately 600 are men and 220 women. Four hundred of the men are supervising teachers, and the rest, men and women, are teachers in intermediate and high schools, including the special branches of agriculture, shop work, mechanical drawing and domestic science. These teachers come from the best homes of America, and for the most part have the best university preparation. They come from all parts of the country, but a very large proportion is from the west. They have youth, enthusiasm, strength and courage all on their side. They give with a sort of lavish willingness the best of their physical and spiritual powers. I believe them to be the most remarkable and efficient body of young people that were ever united together for a common purpose in a work of the kind I have been describing. Success is due to the intelligence, the faithfulness and loyalty of the large body of men and women who make up the corps. These qualities exist in the American teaching force in the Philippines to a very high degree. There have been times of discouragement, there have been periods of dissatisfaction, but through it all the great majority worked hard and unselfishly for the purpose in view, and time has gradually sifted and shaped this force until it represents a body for the most part of splendid material, wise, high-spirited, trained and gifted, who know the Philippine Islands and the Filipino people as no other body of white people will ever know them again, who understand their work more intelligently and more thoroughly, and love it better, than it is frequently given to men and women to attain. More nearly than it has ever been possible before, these teachers have realized an accord between themselves and the people for whom and among whom they are working. They have brought

that better understanding between the races (an end so devoutly hoped and sought for) at least within measurable reach of attainment. They have shown us how one race may guide and strengthen another without self-interest or the employment of any but the noblest means.